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## **Bad Driving Will Cost You**

## Senators Gilbert and Sikkema Announce Michigan Driver Responsibility Program

1 in 6 Traffic Deaths in Michigan Caused by 'Bad Driver'

**(LANSING)** – Michigan's habitually bad drivers will have to pay higher fees to keep their driving privileges and to compensate for the danger they create on state roads, Senator Jud Gilbert, chair of the Senate Transportation Committee and Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema announced at a press conference today.

"Drunk driving, reckless driving and road rage-related incidents have made Michigan's roads and highways more dangerous than ever for our state's law abiding, responsible motorists," Gilbert, R-Algonac, said. "The time has come for us to send a serious message to those drivers who threaten the greater public's safety with their reckless behavior behind the wheel."

According to the "Driver Responsibility Program," a driver who racks up seven or more points in a two-year period will be charged with a \$100 financial assessment, and \$50 for each additional point above seven points.

"People tend to pay attention when something directly affects their pocketbooks," Sikkema, R-Wyoming, said. "We can't be there to prevent a person from speeding in a school zone, running a red light, or driving drunk, but we can see to it that there's a measurable price to pay for disregarding the law and seriously endangering the lives of others."

(MORE)

The assessment will be imposed each year in the two-year period. For example: an individual who receives eight points in a two year period will be assessed \$150 for each of the two years.

When an individual accrues seven points the Secretary of State will send out a notice. If payment is not received within 30 days after the notice is sent, the Secretary of State will send a second notice to inform the individual that payment must be received within the next 30 days, or the individual's license will be suspended.

A similar program has been successfully implemented in New Jersey, with other states such as Texas, Rhode Island, Ohio, California, Florida and Pennsylvania considering similar legislation. Although New Jersey is one of the 10 most populous states in the nation, it has the lowest number of fatalities per mile driven. According to the state's transportation officials, New Jersey has reported a 24 percent decline in driving-related fatalities thanks to the program.

Gilbert and Sikkema said the legislation is another incentive for people to drive safer. A recent *Detroit News* article revealed one in six traffic deaths in Michigan involve a driver with multiple traffic violations. The same report also revealed, according to data provided by the National Highway Safety Administration, that between 1994 and 2001 Michigan ranked fourth in the nation in the percentage of crash deaths involving drivers with bad records.

"With Michigan's roads and highways busier than ever, we need to do something further to get the attention of drivers with the worst driving records," Gilbert said. "Our message is: if you habitually ignore traffic safety laws, it is going to cost you."

The legislation was announced this afternoon during a press conference at the State Capitol.